

A HOME OF OUR OWN: FORMER HARMONY HOUSE FAMILY BACK ON THEIR FEET



When Adam and Tia Natal look back over the past few years, they marvel that their life has taken them on a journey from homelessness to basically living the American dream.

They have two wonderful sons, Gerald, 4, and Benjamin, 3. Both Adam, 26, and Tia, 25, are now employed full-time in good paying jobs and they recently purchased their first home—a modest, two bedroom trailer in South Jersey. Had it not been for their stop at New Community Harmony House transitional living facility in Newark back in 2009, however, the couple is convinced their upward mobility would have been much slower.

"Harmony House gave us a stable foundation," said Adam Natal. "It allowed us to get some things done so we could get ourselves together."

The family landed at Harmony House in October 2009 after Adam lost his carpet cleaning job and they could no

longer pay the rent on their Newark apartment. While at Harmony House, where they had their own apartment, the couple was able to receive needed marriage counseling and parenting workshops, in addition to stabilizing their financial situation with public assistance. Adam Natal also received some training as an auto technician in New Community's Automotive Technician Training Program, but never finished. Tia was trained as a cashier in an NCC Workforce program, which did lead to a local supermarket job.

The couple was able to move out of Harmony House into a Newark apartment in May of 2010, but was still not happy about having to depend on public assistance to make ends meet. Unable to find work, Adam Natal decided to pursue a career as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and enrolled in a training center in Bergen County.

"It was very difficult," he said.

Story continued on page 2

Meekness

"The person who bears and suffers evil with meekness and silence is the sum of a Christian man."

John Wesley

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

Matthew 5: 5

"Both gentleness and meekness are born of power, not weakness."

Jerry Bridges

"Glances of true beauty can be seen in the faces of those who live in true meekness."

Henry David Thoreau

"How do we know we have a servant's heart? By how we act when we are treated like one"

UNKNOWN

For Information on Social
Investment, please contact:

Rev. Msgr. William J. Linder, Jr.

Tel: 973-497-4415

Fax 973-482-2137

233 West Market Street,
Newark, NJ 07103

linder@newcommunity.org,
www.newcommunity.org

A HOME OF OUR OWN.....cont'd



Adam and Tia Natal playing with their sons, Gerald, left, and Benjamin, in their South Jersey home.

He persevered and finished. The couple, who are originally from South Jersey, relocated after Tia found employment as an alarm company dispatcher. Adam graduated from the EMT program and found work with a local ambulance carrier. They bought the trailer, located in a well-maintained park in Williamstown, with the help of a family member.

He works days and she works nights and things are still a bit of a struggle in terms of balancing out the finances and family life. But spending this past Christmas in a home of their own was more than they ever envisioned.

"Even though we still struggle, we're doing it ourselves," Adam said.

And that is the goal of Harmony House –to help residents become self-sufficient.

Working Out



Residents of NCC Orange Senior participate in an exercise class in the building's community room as part of New Community's Senior Wellness Program. This class is led by Angeli Martinez, far right, activities director.

NEW COMMUNITY WAS ON THE MOVE IN 2011

- New Community opens a new Adult Learning Center in Newark's West Ward, where over 2,000 individuals are being served in programs like Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language and GED classes.
- A new charter school, Roseville Community Charter School, opens its doors to more than 100 kindergarten and first graders at the site of the former St. Rose of Lima Elementary School in Newark.
- New Community Extended Care Center, a 180-bed skilled nursing facility, achieves a four-star rating on the Medicare.Gov Nursing Home Compare Report.
- Monsignor William J. Linder receives the "Excellence in Visionary Award" from the World Mission Foundation, a United Nations-affiliated organization dedicated to fighting HIV/AIDS among people of African descent.
- A total of 500 children receive brand new winter coats through a distribution held at the New Community Neighborhood Center, an event made possible by a partnership with the national, non-profit group, Operation Warm.
- New Community preschool teacher Latonya Drayton, who teaches at Community Hills Early Learning Center in Newark's Central Ward, is named Teacher of the Year by the Newark School District's Office of Early Childhood.
- Hundreds of recycled toys are donated to children at New Community Harmony House for Christmas as a result of New Community partnering with Second Chance Toys, a non-profit that rescues and redistributes gently used plastic toys.



Monsignor William J. Linder receiving the Excellence in Visionary Award from World Mission Foundation officials during a ceremony in New York City.

SHE'S ONE IN A MILLION



Cecilia Faulks in her Orange home with the \$1 million Publishers Clearing House check sitting on her dining room table.

Cecilia Faulks, NCC's retired Human Resources Director, was doing her weekly volunteer service at St. Ann's soup kitchen in Newark when she received the call. It was her husband, LeRoy Faulks, Sr., telling her she had to come home. He wouldn't say why, only stressing the urgency.

"All kinds of things go through your mind," said Faulks, 67, noting she was praying all the way.

When her SUV rolled up to the couple's modest, Orange, two-story home a short time later, Faulks found a crowd outside and immediately noticed the Publishers Clearing House van. Waiting for her was the Prize Patrol with a bouquet of red roses and a \$1 million, oversized, sweepstakes check made out to her husband.

"We have been entering this contest for 30 years," said Cecilia Faulks, who worked at New Community for 34

years and was the company's first full-time employee. "I never dreamed they would actually show up at my door one day."

The prize, awarded to the Faulks on Nov. 30th, was the largest ever given out in New Jersey and will see the couple receiving \$5,000 a week, or \$260,000 a year, for the rest of the life of LeRoy Faulks, 68, who is retired from Alcoa Howmet in Dover, a company that manufactures components for jet aircraft, gas turbine and other advanced-technology industries.

Some of the money will go to their church, St. Augustine parish in Newark, where they are now members following the closing of Queen of Angels. Part of the money will also be channeled to the Donna T. Darrien Memorial Foundation for Sickle Cell, named after the Faulks' niece, who died of the disease in 1997.

"We are truly blessed," said Cecilia Faulks, who also visits the sick and shut in and serves communion to the homebound in her role as a Eucharist minister. "God is so good."



Mary Rigby Abernathy

New Community sadly reports the passing of Mary Rigby Abernathy, NCC's one-time Marketing Manager and Director of Project Development. During her years with NCC (1999-2008), Mary was a vigilant advocate for the organization, raising huge sums of money and writing successful grants for housing and other NCC programs.

A long-time breast cancer survivor, Mary had a zest for life and loved to volunteer to make life better for others. Her projects included Habitat for Humanity, teaching art to underprivileged children and helping uninsured Newark women obtain health screenings. She also loved enjoying life with her husband, Bob, with whom she shared a love of sailing, vintage cars, antiques and art.

Angela Potts



Angela Potts was just five years old when her father died. That left her mother alone to raise Angela, along with an older and younger sibling.

"Mom was my inspiration and motivation," said Potts, 41, of her mother, who passed away in early 2010. "She would always say to me that you're stronger than you give yourself credit for."

Today as she works with residents of Harmony House, New Community's transitional housing facility, the Newark native says she uses her mother's words to help empower mothers who are struggling to get back on their feet after falling into homelessness. Potts has worked at Harmony House since 1999, when she was first hired by director Diane Young to be her administrative assistant.

Since then, Potts' role has evolved into more of a case manager, helping clients to navigate the hurdles they perceive to be in the way of self-suf-

ficiency, and that includes their own past mistakes and insecurities. This "baggage," Potts says, is often made lighter by speaking to a social worker with NCC's Family Service Bureau.

"They come to speak to me when it gets challenging and they are trying to figure out what to do next," she said. "I use transparency...that is sharing a lot of my own struggles without attaching my name in order to encourage them to know you are not facing these challenges alone and that you can overcome them."

The reach of Potts' inspiration extends beyond the walls of Harmony House, where she derives her satisfaction from hearing clients say she has been there when they needed a listening ear and some sound advice. Many women with whom she has crossed paths in churches say exactly the same thing. Potts, mother of an 8-year-old son, Allen II, humbly acknowledges that encouragement is one of her spiritual gifts.

"Working with women is a passion of mine. Those in distress...I find myself drawn towards those type of individuals. I can seem to sense when someone is hurting and try to make them feel comfortable enough to open up," said Potts, who studied education for two years at Montclair State University and plans to return to obtain a degree, perhaps in counseling.

Her discussion topics for women's groups have included forgiveness, brokenness and starting over, all issues she says women struggle with but often find it difficult to talk about.

Shannon Barner, an Essex County College intern working at Harmony House, called Potts a "great role model when it comes to her job."

"Maya Angelou speaks of phenomenal women and I have had the experience of meeting one," she said. "Ms. Potts is a woman who inspires and takes pride in her work at Harmony House...to help others seems to be her purpose and she has no problem with fulfilling this goal."

What really helps many of the women, Potts said, is the supportive, family atmosphere that exists at Harmony House.

"We're like their family rather than just being a case manager," Potts said. "We make them feel like this is their home away from home temporarily. It makes the transition a lot easier too."

Potts' favorite scripture is Proverbs 3: 5, 6 which reads, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and he will direct thy paths."

"All the paths may not be as we want them to be, but He will direct us," she said.

OUR MISSION

To help residents of inner cities improve the quality of their lives to reflect individual, God-given dignity and personal achievement.